	CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES MANUAL	Effective Date January 9, 2012		
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Children Requiring Hospitalization

Effective: January 9, 2012

Philosophy:

Minors in foster care are under the responsibility of the Department for their safety, permanency and well-being. The Department acts as custodial parent with full custody of the child subject to the terms of the Child Protection Order. Any child in foster care who must be treated at a hospital emergency room or be admitted for medical or mental health services should have that experience handled with adult guidance, sensitivity and respect.

Legal Base: MRSA Title 22, §4037 Authority of Custodian

Procedure:

Responsibility: The Department is responsible for the medical care and safety of a child in foster care. A department representative (which is inclusive of the caregiver/resource parent) is required to be present with a child who is receiving emergency room services. No minor child in foster care should be left unattended while waiting for mental health or medical assessment in a hospital setting. Only if the child is admitted may staff or other designated adult leave. Follow-up contact must be made within 24 hours after admission.


Birth parents must be informed of any major injury/illness to their child and afforded the opportunity to have safe contact when possible.

Hospital staff are not to be asked to supervise visits by birth parents or other family members as that is a responsibility of the Department. Hospital staff should be fully informed of the legal status of the child and of any visit restrictions, safety concerns or other relevant issues.

After Admission:

When a child in foster care is hospitalized for medical reasons the assigned caseworker shall coordinate with the child's caregiver to ensure the child has adult contact at least every two days.

When a child is hospitalized for mental health needs and it is expected to be a longer term hospitalization, contact should be made by the caregiver or caseworker bi-weekly.

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Discharge Planning:

A Family Team Meeting should be held to facilitate discharge planning for a child in custody if there are any concerns for after care or placement decisions.